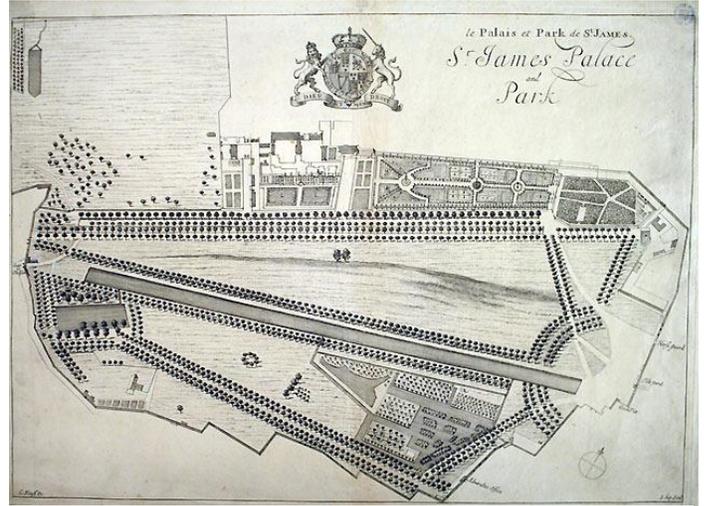


## History on the Rocks: Gadsby's Historic Ice Well

# Ode to an Ice Well

As I stayed home today with my sick son, I was drawn to watching ice melt. Not much changed over the course of the day. But as I stared at the image on the screen, I could better understand the feelings of poet Edmund Waller in 1661. He was inspired by Charles II's [Ice House](#) built in 1660 in [St. James's Park](#) in London. During his exile in France, Charles II took a fancy to French formal gardens and decided to have him one when he was King. This image is his original plan for his Royal Park.



St James's Park (original layout)

Unfortunately the ice house is long gone, but Waller's words describe it's impact.

*ON ST JAMES'S PARK (As lately improved by His Majesty)*

*Yonder the harvest of cold months laid up,  
Gives a fresh coolness to the royal cup,  
There ice, like crystal, firm and never lost,  
Tempers hot July with December's frost;  
Winter's dark prison, whence he cannot fly,  
Tho' the warm spring, his enemy draws nigh:  
Strange! That extreme should thus preserve the snow  
High on the Alpes or in deep caves below.*

Fast forward 300+ years and our ice well is inspiring conversations across the region - "Do you think it melt on my birthday? When do you REALLY think it will melt?" All I know is the first item has emerged from the mound. Wednesday we will offer up our first science geek analysis, and I hope these posts inspire you to buy a raffle ticket or donate to this restoration effort!